- Conservation, development and sustainable management of natural resources including various use.
- Enhancement of agricultural production and productivity in a sustainble manner.
- Restoration of ecological balance in the degraded and fragile rainfed eco-system by greening these areas through appropriate mix of trees, shrubs and grasses.
- Reduction in regional disparity between irrigated and rainfed areas and
- Creation of sustained employment opportunities for the rural community including the landless.

An expenditure of Rs.967.00 crore during Eighth Plan period and Rs.911 crore during Ninth Plan period has been incurred on implementation of the scheme. The scheme is continuing during Tenth Plan period under Macro Management Mode.

In addition, two land based programmes, namely (i) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone River; and (ii) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas in the North-Eastern Regions are also under implementation.

Computer purchase scam in ICAR

†568. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that instead of penalising the persons accused of computer purchase scam involving crores of rupees in ICAR, Government are trying to hush up the matter;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Central Vigilance Commission despite their all out efforts have not so far recovered the reports of the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Pawan Raina Committee and the Bhaskar Barua Committee which have conducted departmental enquiry; and

(c) if the position contained in (a) and (b) above are correct, what action Government have taken in this regard and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV):(a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The CBI had registered PE No. 1(A)/2001-ACU(VI) and investigated into the alleged irregularities in procurement of computers and Networking equipment under NATP. The CBI's investigation is a sequel to the preliminary investigations carried out by Pawan Raina & Bhaskar Barua Committees. As per the CBI's investigation report the inquiry did not reveal any malafides on the part of any officials of ICAR. Since the allegations have not been proved, the CBI has closed the case.

Export of potatoes

569. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that frequent gluts and unremunerative prices often force potato growers to leave part of their crops unharvested;

(b) whether this is because no new outlets have emerged to gainfully utilize the surplus potato and the potato export potential has not been harnessed;

(c) whether it is a fact that the potato production has increased from 5 million tonnes in 1970 to 25 million tonnes at present; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take, so as to promote export of surplus potato?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV):(a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Government is aware of increased production of potato in the country. In order to provide remunerative prices to the farmers, the